Court Document Tells

1-21-75

Central Intelligence Agents spied on a former aide to Howard Hughes in Las Vegas and one of the Watergate burglars may have tried to hire a spy to continue the surveillance in Canada, according to documents filed in federal court yesterday.

Canadian film producer Bruce Bennett McInnes of Richmond, B.C., said in an affidavit two men whom he later learned were CIA agents tried to hire him to "keep tabs" on John Meier's activities in Canada.

Meier, a former "scientific aide" to Howard Hughes, faces a series of income tax evasion charges in Nevada and California totaling more than $1.7 million. The government said the tax violations occurred in 1969 and 1970 when Meier was in charge of acquiring more than 2,000 mining claims for Hughes in Nevada.

Meier, who moved to Canada in 1972 after unsuccessfully running for the U.S. Senate in New Mexico, currently is a fugitive and a bench warrant has been issued for his arrest. He failed to appear in Reno for trial last month on the tax charges. His $100,000 cash bond was revoked and bail was set at $500,000.

The affidavit was filed here Monday in support of a motion asking the government to disclose the extent of its surveillance of Meier. The former Hughes aide, early in the case, unsuccessfully sought a dismissal of the charges on grounds his telephone conversations were bugged because of his association with Donald Nixon.

McInnes said two men identified as "Virgino Gonzales and Mr. Abbott" tried to hire him to do research "consisting solely of keeping tabs on Meier's activities in Canada along with any information on his connections with Donald Nixon, Hughes Tool Co. and Columnist Jack Anderson."

Attorney Robert Wyshak of Los Angeles, representing Meier, said Virgino Gonzales and Virgilio Gonzales, one of the Cubans involved in the Watergate burglary, probably were "one and the same."

McInnes said in his sworn statement Monday he was first approached by the two men in August of 1974 at the Castaways Hotel while he was in Las Vegas to do a documentary film on Howard Hughes. In November of 1974 the same two men made a similar offer and said he would be paid "through a public relations consulting contract with a Canadian based oil company." McInnes said he declined both offers.

Through a contact in New York and

CIA Spy Tale

Miami McInnes learned Gonzales and Abbott were CIA agents and that Gonzales "had been responsible for the wire tapping and general surveillance of John Meier dating back to 1969," said the affidavit.

McInnes said the same two men were "directly responsible for the importation of CIA agents into Latin America and Canada . . . and that Gonzales had a long association with the CIA dating back to the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Defense motions ask the government to disclose electronic and other surveillance by CIA agents of Meier, F. Donald Nixon, his son Donald, his brother Edward Nixon, the late Nevada mining promoter Eldon Cleveland, attorney John Suckling, and former Nevada democratic party chairman Dennis Hill.

When Meier failed to appear for trial in Reno last month on the tax evasion charges he was in London with an ear infection and was told by doctors he might suffer permanent hearing damage if he flew to the United States, his attorney said.

"Apparently the CIA was monitoring the activities of Meier while he was in London under doctor's care during the first week of December and intended to arrest him when he appeared at the American embassy for a medical examination under the bench warrant," said attorney Wyshak.

He said the CIA had copies of Meier's hotel room charges, including a list of all his long distance telephone calls. Wyshak said Meier was considering a suit against the hotel for invasion of privacy.